

Scrutiny Briefing Note

Subject: Enforcement Review- Interim Progress Update

1. Background:

The Enforcement Scrutiny Working Group met from November 2019 to February 2020 in order to review current enforcement arrangements across the council: including but not limited to: - planning, car parking, highways, housing, anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, food safety, trading standards; in short, a focus on place-based enforcement functions.

As a result of the review, the group identified nine recommendations to be taken forward to the Communities Scrutiny Panel. Directors have provided a response to the recommendations and the recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet in June 2020. A list of the recommendations can be seen in the table below

Ref.	RECOMMENDATION
1	That commercial regulatory enforcement teams, currently situated at Estuary House and building control (planning condition enforcement) currently located at New Oxford House should remain separate and grouped by the legislation they enforce.
2	That future integration/generic working of street scene based enforcement activities be considered. Future integration of environmental crime and housing enforcement be explored.
3	That administration and back office support be developed in line with the amount of enforcement activity.
4	That a single point of access for reporting to enforcement teams be developed, combined with a triage approach and referral to appropriate teams. Longer term there should be a move to improved software allowing more joined up working between disciplines.
5	That elected member training be developed relating to the reporting of complaints, referrals and requests for service. This to be implemented following the findings of the customer portal review.
6	That during the municipal year 2020/21 the Communities Scrutiny Panel receive a report on the work of the NELC Officers' enforcement working group.
7	That investment in moving vehicle number plate recognition (NPR) technology and utilising road rule enforcement cameras to increase the positive impact of civil enforcement around highways and parking enforcement should be actively explored.
8	That future procurement of enforcement technology hardware and software, CCTV systems / rapid deployment cameras /. Number plate recognition software / IT systems / case management system / data sharing networks etc. should allow fluency between teams, partners and systems.
9	That, subject to Cabinet approval of a proposed CCTV strategy, the CCTV Strategic Group to provide an annual report (or more frequent if required) to the Communities Scrutiny Panel to inform of progress and performance around the effectiveness and outcomes of the CCTV Strategy and multi-agency working.

An update was provided to Communities Scrutiny Panel in April 2021 where it was noted that recommendations 1, 3, 5, 6 and 9 had been successfully completed, progress had been made in respect to recommendation 7 and 8, whilst further work was still required in relation to recommendation 2 and 4.

2. Report of further progress.

To achieve recommendations 7 and 8 and also to facilitate a wider range of options in respect to recommendation 2 and 4, substantial improvements of current technical solutions has been necessary. This has included re-procurement of key software solutions to enhance service delivery in a cost effective manner and provide a platform to introduce more modern working methods such as efficient fine processing, cashless payments and CCTV technologies which can be used to enforce certain contraventions.

The new joint parking and environmental crime fine processing software has recently completed its user acceptance testing and went live for parking on 1st October 2021, with a live date set for environmental crime fines in the beginning of 2022. The software provides heat mapping technology and will assist with demonstrating the duration and geographical spread of the enforcement activity to plan resources better. The software will further allow expansion into modern camera technology as well as joint processing and appeals handling of multiple fine types if required in the future. To supplement this software, a tender is currently out for the procurement CCTV technologies which will allow Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to be enforced through Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Technology. Tender responses are due to be received in mid-October with evaluation completed by early November.

A further software procurement project is currently in the implementation stage, replacing the very old system used by the Council's Regulatory Services and Equans' Private Sector Housing Team. This will enable closer working between teams, better intelligence gathering and enable opportunities of more modern ways of working.

3. Approach and time scales for further work:

In June 2021 two task and finish groups were initiated to commence an options appraisal for the remaining two recommendations linked to more joined up street-based enforcement and single point of access for customers. The working groups have included membership of officers from across the Council and Equans. The work has further included investigation of best practice from other Local Authorities. An initial summary of the findings and future options are due to be presented to portfolio holder in November 2021 and return to Scrutiny for a more complete update in the new year.

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